

Book Reviews

Flora of Australia Volume 49 : Oceanic Islands 1.

Pp xxiii + 681. 1 black-and-white photograph, 16 colour plates (63 colour photographs), 3 maps, 1 coloured and 41 line drawings. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1994. ISBN 0 644 29384 5 (pbk.). Price \$A 54.95 (paperback), \$A 64.95 (hardcover). Available by mail from AGPS Mail Order Sales, GPO Box 84, Canberra ACT 2601, Australia.

Though listed as Volume 49, this first volume on the flora of Australia's Oceanic Islands came one year after the second volume (Volume 50), covering Part 2 of Oceanic Islands, was published. It covers Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island in the Tasman Sea. Written almost entirely by Mr Peter Green, formerly a botanist at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, this volume includes 136 families, 455 genera and 706 species and subspecific taxa.

The layout of the book is excellent and the descriptions are brief but diagnostic. The clever use of different font and type sizes is easy on the eyes and enables the reader to use the book with ease. Keys to the families, genera and species are clear and well set-out.

The separate checklists of plants in Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island in the introductory chapter are very useful. Endemic and naturalised species listed are marked with different symbols to allow readers a quick survey of the flora at the specific level.

The inclusion of a glossary towards the end of the book is most welcome for readers who are not specialists. This is one of the useful features in Flora of Australia and should set the trend for modern flora writing.

There are a few minor errors and omissions in the book. The colour photograph of Fig. 21 (p. xxi) appears to be inverted while those of Fig. 11 (p. xviii) and Fig. 58 (p. 283) would look more natural sideways. It would have been useful to include a list of illustrations and photographs. About 63% of the families covered are illustrated with line drawings though I feel that more could have been incorporated.

In the Locality Map (fig. 32), the name Vanuatu should be adopted rather than New Hebrides. This is more so when Vanuatu is mentioned in the text (p. 2). The name New Hebrides could have been included under parenthesis to inform readers who are familiar with it.

On page 2, it is stated that the degree of endemism of vascular plants in Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands is 44.9 %. This percentage of endemism should actually be 43.2 considering there are 149 endemics in the 345 indigenous species. This is a very high percentage of endemism for these islands with a total area of about 51.2 sq. km. The explanation of the specific epithet for *Ricinus communis* has been omitted. The genus *Sansevieria* on p. 523, 525 and 676 should be spelt as *Sansevieria*.

Despite these minor errors and omissions, I have no reservation in recommending this book to anyone interested in the flora or even the geography, climate, physical features and history of human habitation of these two islands. Considering the amount of time and effort put into the preparation of this book and the excellent production, not forgetting the impeccable editing, the cost is very reasonable.

Tay Eng Pin

National Parks Board,
Singapore.

Rattans

Dransfield, J. & Manokaran, N. (eds.), 1993. Plant Resources of South-East Asia (PROSEA) No. 6. Pudoc Scientific Publishers, Wageningen. 1993. 137pp. ISBN 90-220-1057-0. Hardbound. Dfl. 120.00. Available from, PROSEA Foundation Publication Office, Wageningen Agricultural University, P.O. Box 341, 6700 AH Wageningen, The Netherlands. For developing countries a cheap paper edition (about US\$ 10.00) is available from, PROSEA Network Office, P.O. Box 234, Bogor 16122, Indonesia.

This is the sixth volume from PROSEA, an international programme on the documentation of information on plant resources of Southeast Asia. This volume by 17 contributors provides details on 23 species and one genus of rattan that are commercially important or have potential to be so. Another 105 less important species are briefly discussed. It is not an identification manual; keys are not provided.

Over virtually all of Southeast Asia the use of rattan in village life is ubiquitous and significant. Traditional cultures would not be the same without rattan. This product has also contributed to the building of cities in this part of the world as the required binding material for wooden